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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 001629

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SUBJECT: A SNAPSHOT OF THE IRAQI COMMUNITY IN JORDAN - SOME OF THE POOREST OF THE POOR

REF: AMMAN 1587

1. (U) AS PART OF ROUTINE REFCOORD MONITORING OF PRM-FUNDED ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR VULNERABLE IRAQIS IN JORDAN (MONITORING REPORT SUBMITTED REFTTEL), FSN REFUGEE ASSISTANT VISITED THE HOMES OF THREE VULNERABLE IRAQI FAMILIES LIVING IN JORDAN, ALL OF WHOM HAD OBTAINED OR WERE SEEKING ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MIGRATION COMMISSION (ICMC)'S USG-FUNDED PROJECT. THE FAMILIES LIVE IN HASHMI SHAMALI AND JABAL AL-NASR, POOR NEIGHBORHOODS IN AMMAN THAT ARE HOME TO LARGE NUMBERS OF IRAQIS. BASED ON THESE HOME VISITS, IT APPEARS THAT THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF VULNERABLE IRAQIS IN JORDAN DO NOT DIFFER WIDELY FROM OTHER ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS, SUCH AS PALESTINIAN REFUGEES WHO QUALIFY FOR UNRWA SPECIAL HARDSHIP STATUS OR IMPOVERISHED JORDANIANS IN SOUTHERN JORDAN. THE IRAQIS' GREATEST HARDSHIP SEEMS TO COME FROM THEIR ILLEGAL STATUS IN JORDAN, WHICH PREVENTS THEM FROM ACCESSING GOJ PUBLIC SERVICES, PARTICULARLY IN HEALTH AND EDUCATION.

2. (SBU) WHILE THE REASONS FOR THEIR PRESENCE IN JORDAN VARY, THESE IRAQIS SHARE THE SAME DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES: LARGELY ILLEGAL STATUS, LIMITED ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE, LIMITED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, SUBSTANDARD HOUSING AND CONSTANT FEAR OF REPRISAL FROM THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT AND/OR DEPORTATION BY THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT. THE UNHCR-RECOGNIZED REFUGEES HOPE TO LEAVE JORDAN QUICKLY, TO BEGIN LIFE IN A THIRD COUNTRY. THOSE IRAQIS RESIDENT IN JORDAN WITHOUT UNHCR STATUS FACE AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE AND MANY REPORT THAT THEY MAY RESORT TO ILLEGAL SMUGGLING TO FIND JOBS IN EUROPE. ALL THE IRAQIS INTERVIEWED EXPRESSED A GREAT DEAL OF ANXIETY CONCERNING POSSIBLE HOSTILITIES IN IRAQ - PARTICULARLY FOR THE SAFETY OF FAMILY MEMBERS REMAINING INSIDE IRAQ. THEY ALSO EXPRESSED THEIR FEAR AND DISLIKE OF THE CURRENT IRAQI GOVERNMENT. SKETCHES OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL STORIES FOLLOW.

3. (SBU) THE RECENT ARRIVALS: A LOOSE FAMILY GROUPING - FATALITY ILL DAUGHTER, TWO GRANDPARENTS AND AN UNCLE - CAME TO JORDAN ONE MONTH AGO IN SEARCH OF MEDICAL TREATMENT. THE GIRL'S FATHER WAS GIVEN PERMISSION BY THE IRAQI AND JORDANIAN GOVERNMENTS TO REMAIN IN JORDAN FOR FOUR DAYS ONLY, AND LEFT HIS DAUGHTER IN THE CARE OF THE OTHER ADULT FAMILY MEMBERS. THE GIRL'S UNCLE REPORTEDLY QUIT THE IRAQI ARMY WITHOUT PERMISSION; HE AND HIS PARENTS FEAR PUNISHMENT IF THEY RETURN TO IRAQ. THIS FAMILY, LIKE MANY OTHER DIVIDED FAMILIES, DID NOT SEEK UNHCR ASSISTANCE AS ASYLUM-SEEKERS BECAUSE THEY FEAR RETRIBUTION FOR THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS STILL LIVING IN IRAQ. THE IRAQI COMMUNITY IN JORDAN WIDELY BELIEVES THAT UNHCR OFFICES ARE WATCHED CLOSELY BY IRAQI INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS, WHO ALLEGEDLY REPORT ALL ASYLUM SEEKERS TO BAGHDAD, WITH REPERCUSSIONS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS REMAINING INSIDE IRAQ. THE FAMILY SOUGHT ICMC'S HELP IN OBTAINING MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR THE GIRL, WHO WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DIAGNOSED WITH CYSTIC FIBROSIS. WHILE ICMC HAS PROVIDED MEDICAL TREATMENT UNDER THE USG GRANT, IT IS ABLE TO PROVIDE LITTLE MORE THAN THAT. THE FAMILY WILL RUN OUT OF SAVINGS IN TWO MONTHS AND HAS NO OTHER MEANS OF SUPPORT. AS ILLEGAL RESIDENTS, THEIR WORK OPPORTUNITIES ARE EXTREMELY LIMITED.

4. (SBU) THE UNHCR CASE: A SHI'A FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLD WITH FIVE CHILDREN, THIS FAMILY ARRIVED IN JORDAN IN JANUARY 2000 AND RECEIVED UNHCR REFUGEE STATUS IN 2002. THE FEMALE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD REPORTS THAT HER HUSBAND WAS FORCED TO REJOIN THE IRAQI ARMY AFTER HE HAD ALREADY FINISHED HIS COMPULSORY SERVICE. THE WOMAN KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT HER HUSBAND'S WHEREABOUTS AND BELIEVES HER BROTHER-IN-LAW MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXECUTED AS PUNISHMENT AFTER HER HUSBAND FLED THE ARMY. THE FAMILY IS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON UNHCR ASSISTANCE TO COVER THEIR HOUSING COSTS AND ON OCCASIONAL CHARITY AND SUPPORT TO PURCHASE FOOD. THE FAMILY REPORTS THAT THEY WERE HARASSED BY THE JORDANIAN COMMUNITY IN THE THEIR PREVIOUS RESIDENCE IN JABAL AL-NASR, WHEN THEIR DISABLED 17-YEAR OLD CHILD WAS BEATEN BY NEIGHBORHOOD CHILDREN, THE MOTHER WAS SUBSEQUENTLY THREATENED BY THE PERPETRATORS' FAMILIES AND THE JORDANIAN POLICE FINALLY ADVISED THE FAMILY TO MOVE. WITH HOPES OF ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM UNHCR, THE FAMILY MOVED TO A NEW APARTMENT IN JEBEL EL WEBDEH, A SAFER AND MORE EXPENSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD. THIS FAMILY RECENTLY

TOOK IN ANOTHER IRAQI FAMILY - A SINGLE MOTHER AND FOUR CHILDREN - LEAVING A TOTAL OF ELEVEN PEOPLE LIVING IN A 75-SQUARE METER (ROUGHLY 675 SQUARE FEET) APARTMENT. THE FEMALE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD HAS STARTED CLEANING HOUSES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, BUT HER EARNINGS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO SUPPORT HER FAMILY. THE FAMILY SEEKS ICMC ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING MEDICAL CARE FOR THE 17 YEAR-OLD DISABLED CHILD.

15. (SBU) THE ECONOMIC MIGRANTS: A FIVE-PERSON MUSLIM FAMILY HAS BEEN LIVING IN JORDAN ILLEGALLY FOR FIVE YEARS, HAVING LEFT IRAQ FOR ECONOMIC REASONS. THE MALE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD WORKS AS AN ILLEGAL DAY LABORER, TRAVELING CONSTANTLY AROUND JORDAN LOOKING FOR WORK AND LIVING ON BELOW-STANDARD WAGES. THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT ALLOWED THE CHILDREN TO BE REGISTERED AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS BUT DOES NOT PERMIT THE FAMILY TO USE GOJ HEALTH FACILITIES. ONE OF THE CHILDREN IS SUFFERING FROM A SERIOUS BLOOD DISEASE AND MOST OF THE TIME IS UNABLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL. THE FAMILY DOES NOT KNOW HOW LONG THEY WILL BE ABLE TO STAY IN JORDAN AND APPARENTLY HAS NO MEANS TO GO BACK TO IRAQ. THE FAMILY SEEKS ICMC ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR THE ILL CHILD.
GNEHM